

## Parent Instrumental Music Program

The parent instrumental music program was designed as a result of extensive research to provide parents, who did not have a musical background, with music lessons so they could assist their child with their home practicing. The program is offered to all parents of beginning band students, and the program is a six week course that meets once a week for one hour; the lessons are conducted in one of my three elementary schools. The parents are required to bring their child's instruments, because they will be learning how to play the instrument, receiving the same instruction on the instrument as their child. Along with the same instruction, the parents will also receive instruction on various problems that students may encounter and the solutions to those problems. Parents are also encouraged to play the instrument while the child acts as the teacher, critiquing the parent, and then switch with the child playing and the parent as teacher.

The objectives of this program are as follows: 1. parents will be able to comprehend the physical and cognitive process that is involved with learning to play an instrument, 2. parents will be able to identify and understand musical concepts (such as rhythm, note names, time signatures, etc...) that will help them to assist their child with their practicing, 3. parents will be able to identify problems (such as poor posture, poor hand position, poor tone, etc...), and they will be able to provide solutions to these problems, and 4. parents will be able to provide a positive and supportive environment, motivating the child through this interaction between parent and child.

One reason why this program is innovative is because it requires a hands on participation from the parents, and it promotes the parent-child interaction; to my knowledge, such a program does not exist with beginning band students. This program has the parents take an active part in the learning process, and not just being supportive of their child by attending meetings or concerts, as do most parental involvement programs. When the parent has to hold and play an instrument, they have a better understanding of what their child is experiencing, and they could provide solutions for similar problems that the student is experiencing. The active involvement also promotes more interaction between parent and child, fostering a greater desire to continue playing the instrument beyond the first year. The students will be able to achieve more because they do not have to wait until the following week to have a problem solved; the parents will be able to work with them.

**Core Curriculum Content Standards**

Standard 1.2 All students will refine perceptual, physical, and technical skills through creating dance, music, theater, and/ visual arts.

CPI 1. Demonstrate performance and participation skills by working and creating individually and with others.

Standard 1.4 All students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique

CPI 1 Explain the criteria by which they evaluate the quality of their work and the work of others.

**Cross-Content Workplace Readiness**

Standard 3 All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.

CPI 3.1 Recognize and define a problem, or clarify decisions to be made.

3.2 Use models, relationships, and observations to clarify problems and potential solutions.

3.13 Select and apply appropriate solutions to problem-solving and decision-making situations.

Standard 4 All students will demonstrate self-management skills.

CPI 4.1 Set short and long term goals.

4.2 Work cooperatively with others to accomplish a task.

4.4 Describe constructive responses to criticism.

4.5 Provide constructive criticism to others.

The program is designed for both the parent and child to work together assisting each other in the learning process. The parent will have the knowledge to help the child refine the skills needed to play the instrument; this is accomplished by working individually and with others—the parent. The parent models the technique or tone while the child imitates the example. When the parent and child switch roles, child as teacher, the child has to identify the problem and provide a solution to that problem. This concept of role reversal allows the student to critique and to provide constructive criticism of a performance.

It is important for all children to acquire good study habits, or in this situation good practicing habits. Many parents are able to help their child with their math, spelling, history, or science homework, but that is often not the case with music. Unfortunately, many parents do not have the knowledge to help their child with their music lessons, and as a result of this many students may discontinue playing their instrument because of frustration. This program provides the parents with the knowledge to assist their child with practicing so they can become more proficient on their instrument. Parents are told what they should hear while their child is practicing, and if they hear something else then their child is not doing what they are supposed to be doing. They are also encouraged to sit and observe the child practicing as well as practice with them. This will reinforce their practicing habits, and at the same time the parents can provide feed back to the child by praising them or correcting them.

The parent instrumental program was initially a research project that investigated an active parental instrumental music program and its effect on beginning band students' musical achievement and musical motivational scores. At the conclusion of the study, those children whose parents participated in the parent lessons scored higher in both their musical achievement and musical motivational scores. A criterion Etude was used to measure the musical achievement scores, and an attitude survey was used to measure the motivational score.

## **Replicating the Program**

The parent instrumental music program would not be that difficult to implement into another school or school district. It would take the willingness and desire of the band director to give up a night to work with parents, along with the support of the school district and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or Home and School Organization (HSO) to fund the program. After the results of my study demonstrated significant findings, I thought it would be a valuable addition to my beginning band program. One problem stood in my way, and that was who would fund the program? Many schools are faced with tight budgets and cannot afford to add a program such as this. I had the support of the administration to do the program, but there were no monies available. It was recommended that I approach the PTO and HSO of my schools to see if they would help. I submitted a proposal of the program to the PTO and HSO, and they were very happy to help fund the program.

The parent instrumental music program has been part of my program for the past four years, and the parents who participated, and those who are currently in the program, have praised the value of it, and they were grateful that something like this was offered.